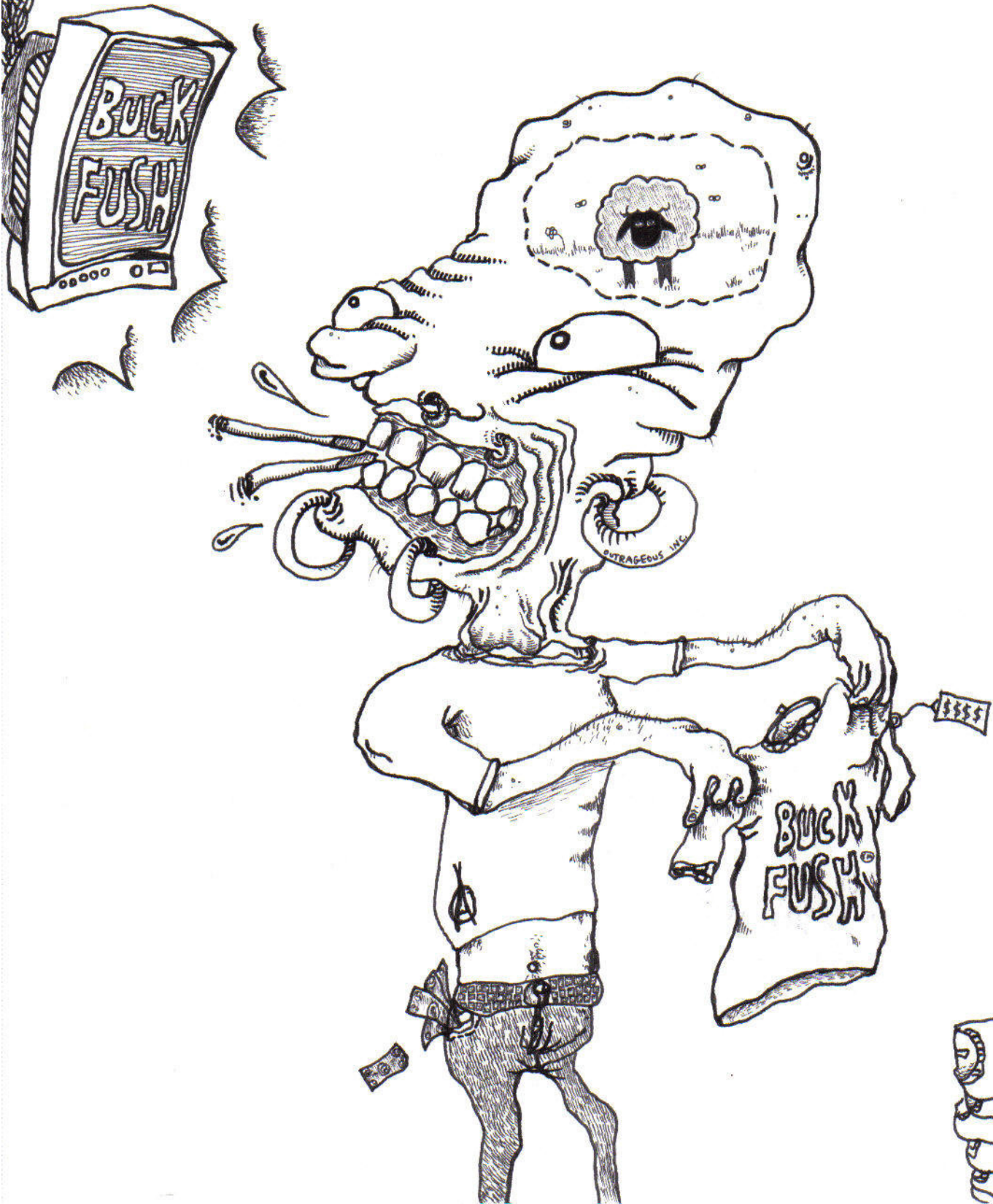


OMEN!!!!





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omen

Volume 25, issue 2

September 30, 2005

layout & editing

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B3 Long	Cheeky Godzilla
C3 Long	Very quiet Co-ed Non-smoking Godzilla
Keegan Kuvach	Totally violated Godzilla

THE OFFICIAL OMEN HAIKU:

Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)



Front Cover by:

Chris Byler

Back Cover by:

Andrew Flanagan



to submit

Submissions are due Saturdays before 5 p.m. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, and typed hard copies will also be accepted, reluctantly. Label your disks well and they will get back to you. Get your stuff to Abby Ohlheiser, Merrill C312, x4482. You may also use e-mail. Send e-mail submissions to awo03@hampshire.edu

And be sure to read our policy box at the bottom of the next page before submitting.

Visit the Omen's spankin' new website! omen.hampshire.edu

SS is kind of like the old crusty ice cream left around the side of the ice cream tub, of a flavor nobody really likes anyway.

Abby Ohlheiser, while imbibing energy drinks

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Editorial

by Abby Ohlheiser, Editor-in-Chief

From Wikipedia's entry on Taurine, a substance commonly found in energy drinks:

Taurine (from taurus = ox, as it was discovered in ox bile) or 2-aminoethanesulfonic acid is an acidic chemical substance found in bile which acts as an emulsifier for ingested lipids and assists in their absorption. Taurine may also come from synthetic materials.

Chemically it is a colorless crystalline substance with the empirical formula $C_2H_7NO_3S$, formed by the hydrolysis of taurocholic acid or decarboxylation of cysteine. Found in the bile, as well as juices and fluids of muscle, lungs and nerve tissue of many animals, and plays several important roles in the body and is essential to newborns of many species. While it is often referred to as an amino acid, this is an inaccurate categorization since it does not contain any carboxylic acid functional groups.

Taurine has two major roles in human metabolism:

It plays a role in digestion. It is conjugated with the bile acids chenodeoxycholic acid and cholic acid to form (at the usually above 7 pH of bile) the bile salts, sodium taurochenodeoxycholate and sodium taurocholate (see bile).

It may assist in the formation of reactive oxygen species for the respiratory burst in neutrophil granulocytes

There is evidence that it is an inhibitory neurotransmitter in the central nervous system.

It has been linked to a number of other metabolic functions but its role is not clear.

It has been tested medically in the treatment of congestive heart failure, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, epilepsy and several other conditions. It is used by some as an antidote for monosodium glutamate.

Sources of dietary taurine include shellfish and organ meats such as liver. Milk contains taurine, but cows' milk does not.

Taurine is one of the active ingredients commonly found in energy drinks such as Red Bull, and in pills which often feature caffeine and/or other stimulant ingredients. The manufacturers claim that taurine enhances the effects of caffeine, but to date there have been no studies performed to confirm this.

Taurine is essential for cats; cat food is supplemented with taurine, which is why other pet foods are not recommended for cats. Taurine supplements may be important to counteract the effects of human aging on the natural taurine production process. As humans age, hepatic taurine production can fall or fail completely, producing low to no energy, cardiac, digestive, and mental problems, and premature death.



policy

The *Omen* is Hampshire's longest-running bi-weekly publication, established by Stephanie Cole in December of 1992. In the past, submissions have included students' perspectives on the campus, administration, news, movie reviews, commentary, short fiction, satire, first born, artwork, comics, and the occasional embarrassing self-promotion. Everything the *Omen* receives, provided it is sent from a member of the Hampshire community, will be published unless it is deemed libelous or defamatory. Although we find such things amusing and entertaining for countless hours, it is just not an option in this forum. Libel will be considered clearly false or unsupportable writing that maliciously damages a person's reputation.

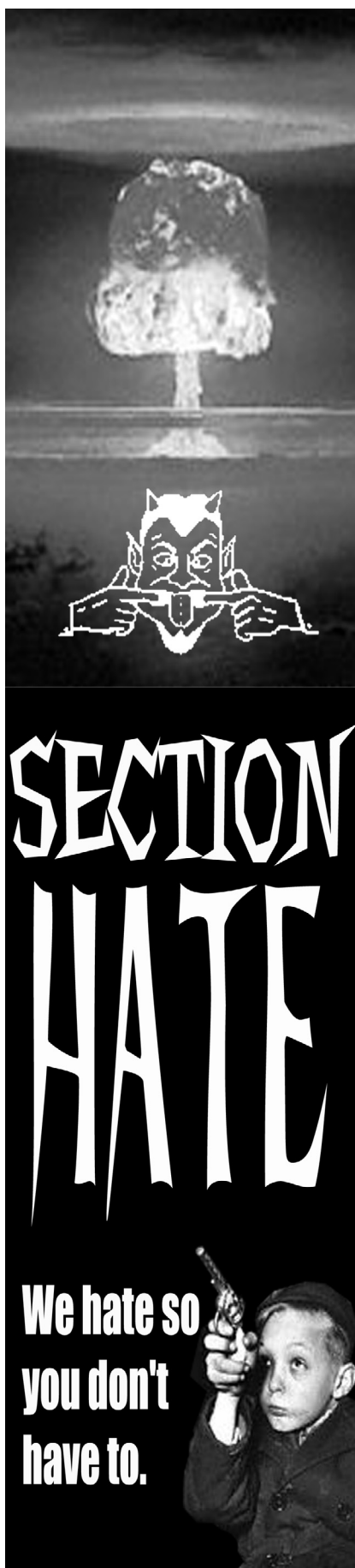
The *Omen* will not edit anything you write

(except spelling and grammar). You must sign your real name (no anonymous submissions) and understand that you are responsible for what you say. Nonetheless, views in the *Omen* do not necessarily represent the views of anyone, anywhere, living or dead.

There is no *Omen* staff, save those positions of editor-in-chief and layout editor. To qualify for community service you must be a consistent contributor and help regularly with layout. Layout times (and such) will be discussed at our meetings. Meetings are held every Tuesday after release of an issue in the Bridge Cafe at 9PM. Everyone, everywhere, living or dead, should come.

The *Omen* loves you.





DEAR SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT: GET OVER YOUR FUCKING EGOS

If Solomon were to suggest to the five schools of Hampshire College that the college should be split into five equal parts, they would all start arguing about whose knife to use. And whose knife would fuck it up. And whose piece should be biggest.

Really though, after sitting in on some school meetings and the EPC, I see an overwhelming amount of power-playing among the different schools. HACU thinks they've got some birthright or something because their student representation (1/4th of the professors) is almost bigger than some of the other schools. NS, though it has fewer students than any other school, considers itself at least as important. Prove it.

Essentially the only reason I can see for a quantitative analysis learning goal is so that Natural Science doesn't fade away into obscurity because no one wants to do it. Their survival has been institutionalized. Here's an idea: Lose some of your bad professors and use the money to attract more students to the program. Actually give the humanities students a reason to come. Pair up with HACU and CS and have an anatomy for artists and animators. That's anatomy, a natural science, but you'll get a lot of art students who are interested in the subject. The college is predominately billed as a humanities and arts school. NS professors should actually have to reach out to students rather than having their positions institutionalized in a way that creates mass resentment.

Cognitive science: apparently some agreement was reached in some 'signs committee' or something to not put the name of any one school on any building, so you shouldn't have "the school of cognitive sciences" on your door. According to HACU, they own half the professors in that building. Conversely, HACU... get over yourself. You have far better things to do than complain about this sign.

There is a plan to combine the HACU and IA distribution requirements so that the schools combined need to only provide 400 class-seats for first-years. IA, the smaller of the two, will provide 100 seats for first years, while HACU will provide 300. No matter which way one looks at it, this creates more 200 level classes for humanities students, and will decrease the workload for many professors. Yet, HACU faculty are worried that IA will get off *more* than they will. You can't get more fucking selfish than that.

Part of the reason Hampshire College is having so much difficulty with its first year program and a clear academic message is because the schools schools are so divided. Solomon would go to cut the baby in half, and the schools would argue about the size of each piece. The baby, a metaphor for the students, on the other hand would say, "Fuck this," and stop caring who it's mother is, because frankly that's what's happening to the students. When it was suggested that we put alternative learning

continued on next page

by: Jacob Lefton

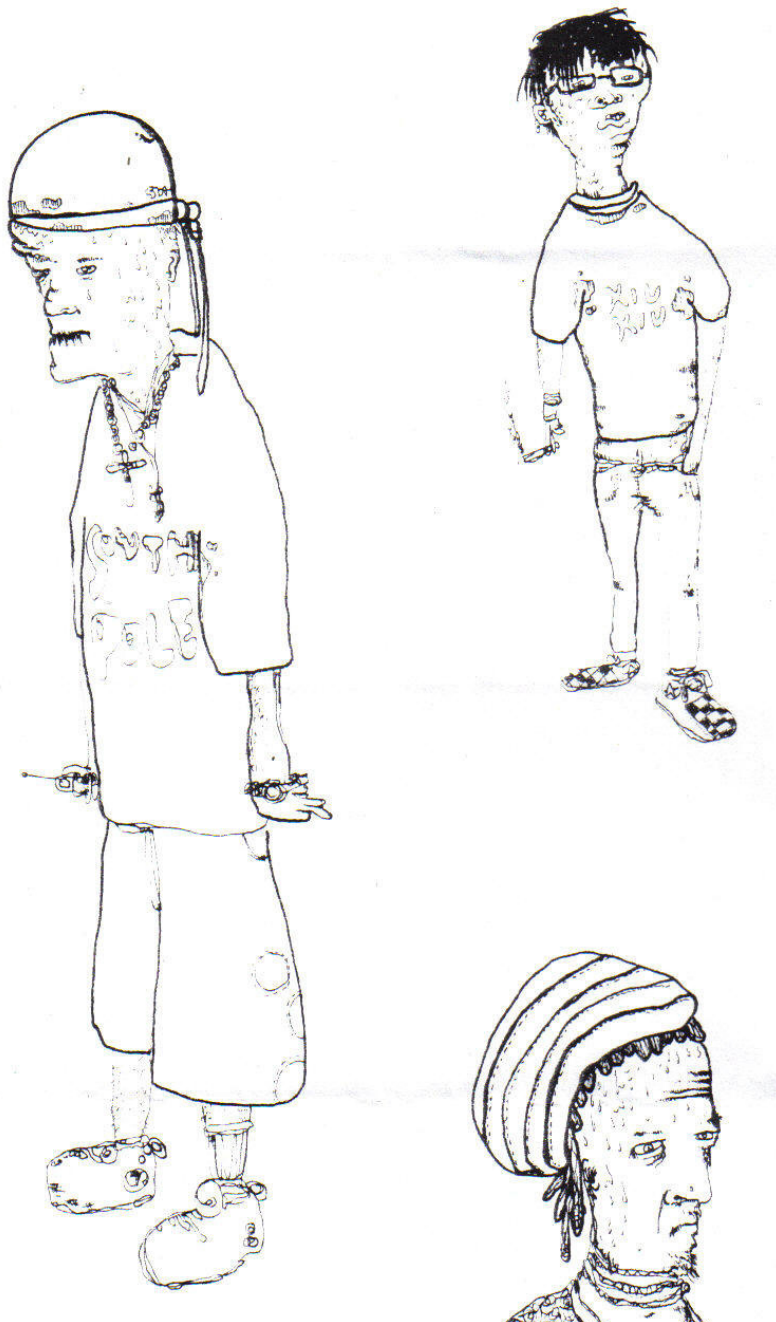
TRAPPED IN THE CLOSET Ch. 791

I don't go to Hampshire, but I am here for the weekend and I have made a terrible discover about the students here. Several of them are... hippies! Dirty, dirty hippies. Also some of them have latent mutant powers. Are these really the sort of people we want studying at our nation's most prestigious university of higher learning? Ha ha, just kidding, Hampshire isn't prestigious. I go to Wesleyan, that shit's prestigious. Also, we have to read mad academic reading with words like "hermeneute" and "vermiform" and "exegesis". Here at Hampshire, it's just hippie mutants smokin' the ganj + watching movies all day. Anyway, if any of you mutants want to join my superhero team and fight against evil and the forces of International Capitalism, feel free to join up. I've got metal claws like Wolverine.

J/K I <3 Hampshire.

by: Abby O'Reilly

by: Chris Byler



Continued from page 4: Fuck you, HACUIANSCSSS

activities into the first year program, and a professor suggested through snarky comments that it would be as educational as letting them smoke pot, we can see exactly how much the students are valued by professors. And that, my friends, is why students are so apathetic. That is why, if left to their own devices, students would major in bonfires and bong construction. Because professors aren't willing to let go of their own ego and work for the greater cause of education.

Here's a daring proposition: We should get rid of the schools altogether. People cross over the lines so much there really isn't any need to have such defined borders. Maybe then the educational plan will have some life breathed into it and the school will stop feeling so dead in the water.



SECTION SPEAK

DEFINING MOMENTS AS A FUTURE HAMPSHIRE STUDENT: PART TWO

I'm sure you have them. Those moments in your past which, in retrospect, set you up for being a student here at Hampshire. Those anecdotes you may or may not tell, but which are forever burned into your memory. These are mine.

I don't remember quite what year it was. It was probably about middle school, and I was at summer camp. It was a two week long, YMCA, sleep in cabins and do random things during the day sort of summer camp. This was the first and last time I went to this kind of program, although I did more fun, actually interesting programs coordinated through that camp other time. I was, in short, miserable. The other guys in my cabin and I did not get along at all. But that's not really what this story is about. What this story is about is a game of soccer.

At this camp, the counselors were, for some reason, largely foreign. Further, most of them were British. I don't know why. When it came time for the traditional staff game of soccer, the teams were split: Britain vs. the World. From the start, it was pretty clear that Britain would have a crushing victory. They had a larger base of players, and just plain better players.

Leading up to the game, they would lead cheers for themselves, to build enthusiasm among the campers. I don't remember much of it, but I remember in particular one cheer. They had taken a song/chant thing that was already in use in the camp's dining hall, and rewritten the words to praise themselves. "And they never lost/And they always won..." The dining hall roared with their bravado and the according enthusiasm they built in the rest of the campers. I was

left a bit cold by all this.

Food got distributed, and everyone calmed down. After a short while, the lone Australian counselor appeared at one end of the hall. He was draped in his flag, and he jogged slowly and silently through and out the other side. Watching him weave through the mass of tables and people undemandingly, I was struck by the dignity there. His team was going to lose, but he took that with pride. This simple act impressed me far more than anything Britain had done, or could do.

When the game happened, I was firmly in the group cheering for the World. We were a lot smaller than the amount of audience cheering for Britain. As the game went on, and the score predictably diverged, those cheering for the world tapered off, but I stayed strong. I cheered by myself for a long time, and a number of people tried to get me to just shut up. I cheered for them to the very end, because it wasn't about who won, it was about the fact that one team had dignity. All the other team had going for it was the fact that they were better.

I remember saying as much to someone afterwards: "They only won because they had better players." Whoever I was talking with didn't get it. "Well, duh." Immediately after the game ended, I also had a bit of run in with soccer hooliganism. Two of the other kids who were annoyed at my incessant cheering for the losing team, decided to chase me around the field for a little while.

I don't regret what I did there at all. I'd do it again, regardless of how many people I annoyed.

by: Stephen Morton

News, Commentary,
Announcements,
Propaganda,
Editorials.



BREAD AND PUPPET THEATER: CONVENTIONAL AND REGRESSIVE!

The Bread and Puppet Theater performed on the lawn at Hampshire College on the afternoon of September 18th. More than anything else, I was furious with the performance and the audience's response. The performance presented complex contemporary issues (war, capitalism, the role of the state, etc) with a hyper-simplicity in both the structure of the performance as well as the content. The performance asked little of the audience as the troupe clearly presented how we should feel about the content. The tone was so explicit that the audience felt sure enough of the good guys and bad guys to cheer and boo on cue. The pieces minimally pushed structural conventions. The dance section followed a typical organization: spaced in a staggered formation, dancers executed moves in unison on an eight count facing the audience. This is description of any conventional and unadventurous dance number. The performance fell back upon the same structure that those in power use: we are the righteous defenders of truth. The short sketch where one performer wearing a "NY Times" sign and another wearing a "Truth" sign miss each other's embrace reflects a conventional and dangerous view of journalism. Media does not report on what actually happens in the real world; media producers construct narratives.

Whether these narratives correspond to what actually happened is irrelevant as in the social world, things are what is said about them. There is no truth to be told; only subjective

accounts to be offered as such. Mainstream media deserves critique for a manifold of reasons, the least valid of which is its distance from reality.

To their credit, Bread and Puppet did make departures from the conventional theater event. The free performance happened in a field with low tech props and depended on volunteers from the community to play a significant role in the performance. Continuing with the tradition of the troupe, they offered free bread to the audience. Children, dogs, and college students felt free to wander, bark, and dance, a liberty absent from traditional performance events.

I can articulate two approaches to making socially relevant work: (a) use the inviting and entertaining aspects of art to spread information about our discontents and (b) create situations which propose alternatives to the present society. The first aim surrounds getting a message out, however conventional or un inventive the means. The second view asserts that the obstacle to social change is not a lack of information, but instead the problem rests in the way we relate to information about our world. The medium can either be a massage (to the existing society) or a message.

The term political is often placed on art which has explicitly political content rather than pieces that experiment with form. The work of formally innovative artists has more relevance to the task of designing new organizational structures. Undesirable dynamics, such as the oppres-

sion of Latin American workers and the casualties of the Iraq war that Bread and Puppet notes, are symptoms of a diseased society not simply malfunctioning parts to a healthy system. We need system designers not doctors.

At Hampshire and in the larger society, I have noticed a pattern of audiences placing more support in work that follows structural conventions. A fine example of this can be found by comparing the number of audience members at the Bread and Puppet Performance to the number attending a concert by the experimental music duo Fe-Mail who played on September 6th at Hampshire. Fe-Mail challenges audiences by playing music that pushes commonality and banality in formal structures and raises questions about sexism. Two thirds of the audience left during Fe-Mail's performance, leaving approximately fifteen audience members at the conclusion of their performance. Why is it that experimental art has less support than more conventional work, such as Bread and Puppet that entertained at least 200 people?

I encourage experimentation both in the work we make and in our role as audiences. Let's squelch ironic consumption and revel in the challenge of changing our art and our world.

Olive McKeon is a student of the School for Designing a Society in Urbana, Illinois. She welcomes respondents, advocates, and disagree-ers to write to kom04@hampshire.edu.



by: Olive McKeon



FARMY BITS, HAMILTON MONTANA

Fall belches yellow leaves all over the place then unceremoniously drops its deciduous brood the ground. Thus Hamilton replaces leaf-

peeping with 'Apple Days', a celebration that nowadays involves only a small modicum of apples. Das Bitter-root Valley holds other surprises too, like how at 3100 feet the clouds are closer. The local NPR affiliate has small 'Native News' spots throughout the day, and most convenience stores sell chainsaw oil. Sundry hardware for farming, plumbing, electric, husbandry, etc. may be found in the 'Quality Supply' at the edge of town. (Discount clothes at this establishment are not of any notable quality and may in fact tear easily).

Billy the crazy entertainer guy at the farmer's market always plays the Canadian anthem on his electric keyboard. He has thin hair, a hippie-gone-circus-clown wardrobe, and lots of sequins. When he gets to the US national anthem everybody stands still and looks at the flag. The truly patriotic remove their

hats in deference to whatever they deem appropriate, but my fellow intern Dan seems peeved and tends to look elsewhere. It's ok cause he's a good guy.



Kohlrabi! One of my favs to harvest! But I made this pic pretentious?

There used to be more ducks and chickens running around near the farmhouse, but we killed a bunch of them. The ducks have a sweet pen in the back with a

fenced-in pasture area amongst a few fruit trees where they hopefully poop. There used to be two sets of chickies- one at the farm proper in a sizeable pasture area,

and one here at the house running around in a little 'chicken tractor'. Imagine a wedge shaped shelter, 12' long 4' wide and 4' high, with wheels at one end. Now imagine like 10 chickens clucking around, pecking at the small piece of ground covered by this 'chicken tractor' and each day you move it/them (via previously mentioned wheels) to a new patch of ground. It's basically a way to fertilize your ground with animals, plus they eat little buggies that might otherwise pester your veggies.

Anywho we killed the chicken tractor chickens except for two small bantams, and also cut short the lives of 15 ducks and a couple geese. Typical small farm bird-butcher involves two simple devices: a cone, a knife. The cone is aptly named,

a cone-shaped piece of metal hung from a post with the pointy side down (NOTE: there's a hole at the top. . . very important). You take a *calm* bird, generally kept

by: Aaron Buchsbaum

calm by putting it in a dark box beforehand, and place it head-first into the cone so that its face and neck comes out the hole and its butt is in the air. When its in this deliciously comfortable position you pinch the skin around its neck so that the jugular is stretched out a bit from the bone, and using the point of your knife you puncture the skin just above your fingers. For the coup-de-grace you cut outwards through the jugular (if it wasn't already pierced by the point) and watch your bird bleed and kick around, wings pinned and ass-end up. If you have your wits about, you

might mutter a little thanks for under your breath for food.

The birds had a good life here, with food, friends, water, and space (the chicken tractor is kinda cramped tho). I was vegetarian for a year before coming out here but I'm fine with the way these animals are treated, and unless you're fruitarian you kill something for food. I walked by a line of shattered kale stalks a couple days ago and it was creepy, different from feeling the last slow kicks of a bird with a severed neck, yes, but I still got that 'life feeds on life' vibe. Thank you Tool.



We make piles of cabbage heads as well.

One note about the ducks and geese. After you cut their jugular they still crane their necks around to look at you, blinking and occasionally quacking. This can go on for like half a minute. Sometimes its best to snap the neck as well, just twist and pull.

After the last spasms you sever the neck completely, then grab their limp feet and submerge the bird in ~170 degree water to loosen the feathers. If you're older-skool, you then tie the bird up to a tree branch or similar horizontal hanging thingy and proceed to pluck out all its plumage. Alternatively there are automatic pluckers, spinning tubs of doom that save lots of time and effort. You know the marble on a roulette wheel? Well pretend that marble is a bird and that there are rubber nubs all over the wheel tearing out feathers as the carcass spins by. Das machine takes about 30 seconds to pluck a bird; by hand, its 30 minutes easy for a newbie. As for gutting the birds, make sure not to cut the large intestine because near-anal bacteria aren't so good for the eating.

The field has of course changed greatly since my arrival in mid-July. The kale is mowed over, as is the buckwheat, the chard, and the corn. Most of the lettuce rows are long lines of spaded dirt and even the beds of rye grass (cover crop) are being torn up to keep out the 'Quack Grass'. Said grass is amongst the most heinous of Montana weeds- it can be dug up, left on a fence for two years, fall back on the ground and start growing again. As an added bonus its roots are quite pointy and will spear a potato. Other popular weeds include 'Lambs Quarter', 'Pig Weed', and 'Purslane', the



Willy, Trapper, and Maggie (dogs) spent many days sniffing this duck blood

latter being quite edible and a good substitute for spaghetti. Weeding as an important farm chore went out with the end of August, and anyway most of that shit is gonna die Sunday evening (the 25th) during the first heavy frost. And by the by pulling plants out of the ground seems easiest with the new moon, I'm told because gravity plays with soil just as it plays with the sea.

Hard-core harvesting is finished now, and moving into fall crops means lots of winter squash, beets, carrots, potatoes, onions, and Jerusalem artichokes. Still have some brassicas (cabbage, broccoli, kohlrabi, cauliflower) growing as well. They're pretty good until a 20-degree frost or so, which means we still bring some nice variety at market in Missoula and Hamilton. The tomato greenhouse is also totally rockin'; I picked between 70 and 80 pounds on Monday and the plants are still chock full. We're just vomiting toma-

toes everywhere, it's insane. Much of the red harvest is currently in the form of sauce (to be canned on Sunday) or salsa (easily freezable), or has been dried. Preserving veggies when in season is awesome, and I'm definitely looking forward to picking up canning as a skill whilst out here.

The last of the leafy greens is in the field too- another round of spinach and salad mix, a few heads of lettuce (comes in 5 flavors! Green Romaine, Red Romaine, Green Leaf, Red Leaf, and Red Oak! Try them all!). Same goes for the zucchini, summer squash, and cucumbers. Two weeks ago I ripped up all the bean plants for compost cause they were done spittin out pods. Good little plants they were, full of purple and yellow snappy goodness, with the occasional purple-speckled white pod with blue beans inside. Sadly that particular bean tasted like buttox, a travesty after looking

so awesome.

Evidently I've been enjoying my time here immensely, and could write much more about various vegetables or farmy jobs. Should you ever decide to visit the Bitterroot Valley in Western Montana I highly recommend stopping by Homestead Organics, my happy little home for the past couple o' months. We're in the WWOOF book and volunteering for a few days or a few weeks is definitely cool. The room and board is pretty sweet, as we cook some seriously awesome foods 'round here (chicken, duck, and local pasture-raised pork included. . . also elk, antelope, and deer hunted from the mountains). In the mean time it might be worth your while checkin out the Hampshire farm, and especially the pick-er-own veggie rows. Could be able to catch the last few beans or toms or sumpin.

G'luck anyway. Until nexty time.



AUNTIE MARJ'S HOME-COOKED ADVICE

Dear Auntie Marj,

I have been spending a lot of time with my ex – boyfriend lately. We broke up because neither of us felt like we had the time or energy to put into a relationship. I really still love him, and I think he feels the same, but I know he is practical and doesn't want to be together unless we are both able to commit. Now, when we are friends, it never seems difficult to find time for the other, but when we are dating, it seems that there is so much pressure to make more time. How can we take our relationship to the next level without feeling so much pressure to be together all the time?

-Time Spent

Dear Time Spent,

Before you go anywhere with this you need to make sure that you and your ex are on the same page. Because it's possible he thinks turning your relationship into some "friends with benefits" kind of thing is easier than having a relationship with you. And you need to make sure that you really want it. If the only reason why you broke up is because you couldn't find a way to make your schedules mesh, then there needs to be some reason for why it's working now.

If he is on the same page than I suggest you take it slow. Ease back into things. Jumping into it might only set you back into old routines and if those didn't work last time they're probably not going to work this time.

And remember this, when people are in a relationship together sometimes they think that means they need to be together all the time. Which is true and yet it's not. Your concern should be in the way you spend your time together and not how much time is spent.

-Auntie Marj

Dear Auntie Marj,

Last year I was in a show with a girl and as time went on, I began to fall for her. Hard. I think it might have mostly been the performance aspect that made her so beautiful but I started to feel the butterflies offstage as well. She has a boyfriend and it's a waste of my time for me to dream but I can't stop thinking about her sometimes. The feelings aren't as intense as they used to be but I'm going to see her soon. Should I leave my guard down or up? Is it worth letting these feelings surface again?

- Conflicted

Dear Conflicted,

If she is still in a relationship with her boyfriend you should respect that. Try being friends with her. If you felt the butterflies when you were around her then it can't be just because of your lust for her, there had to of been something in her personality that attracted you to her.

So when you see her again, don't put your guard up or down. Leave it in the middle, and take

by: Marjorie Gidwitz



SECTION
SWEET

your cue from her. If she's into it, than go for it. If not, you can always be friends.

If you end up being friends and you still have those feelings for her, its okay. But remember that it's only a dream and should remain as such if need be. You just need to take care that you don't let other opportunities pass you by.

-Auntie Marj

*Dear Auntie Marj,
I dated my ex – boyfriend for two years, and basically gave up all my goals and dreams to make him feel more comfortable in the relationship. He ditched me for my best friend. I am accepting of their relationship, but I see him doing the same thing to her – manipulating her to give up friends and dreams so she can stay at home with him. I know it will just be a matter of*

time before he dumps her and leaves her depressed; how do I convince her, blinded by love, that he is ruining her self-esteem?

-Lost

Dear Lost,

If he is indeed doing the same thing to your friend that he did to you then he's a "serial relationship ruiner". You need to be wary of this. If she was friends with you while you were dating him she should have seen what the relationship was doing to you. And in a friendly way you could talk to her and remind you of how you were when you were with him and that it was because of him.

You need to understand why he does this to his girlfriends. Most likely there is something about him that is making him like this. If you can pinpoint the root of the problem you can save

your friend the heart-ache that you went through. She needs to understand that you don't have any deep seeded ulterior motive for trying to help her, because she might be a bit suspicious of you due to the fact that you dated him.

Ultimately you just need to be there for her. Even if it hurts you to watch him hurt her, the way he hurt you. The most important thing is your friendship and her emotional safety. Make sure she understands that you're there for her, and that all you want is for her to be happy. Good luck!

-Auntie Marj

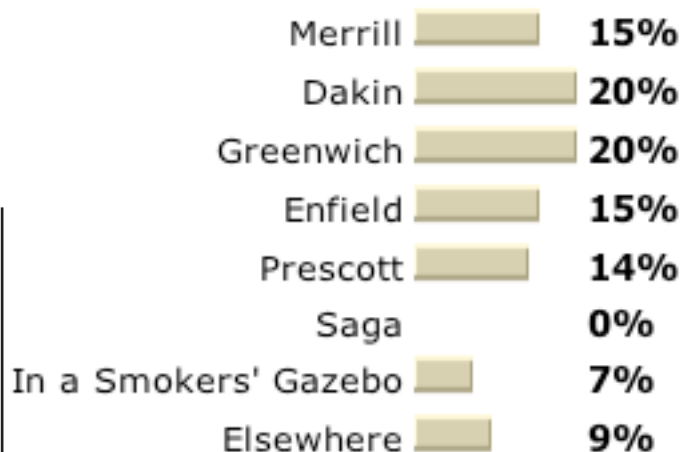
If you need any advice or have any questions; write "Home Cooked Advice", Box 627. Or email me at mwg04@hampshire.edu. And remember, everything you send in will be completely anonymous.



From the Daily Jolt:

HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE POLL RESULTS

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?



Poll open to: Hampshire users

BATTELEMENTS OF CELESTIAL FIRE?

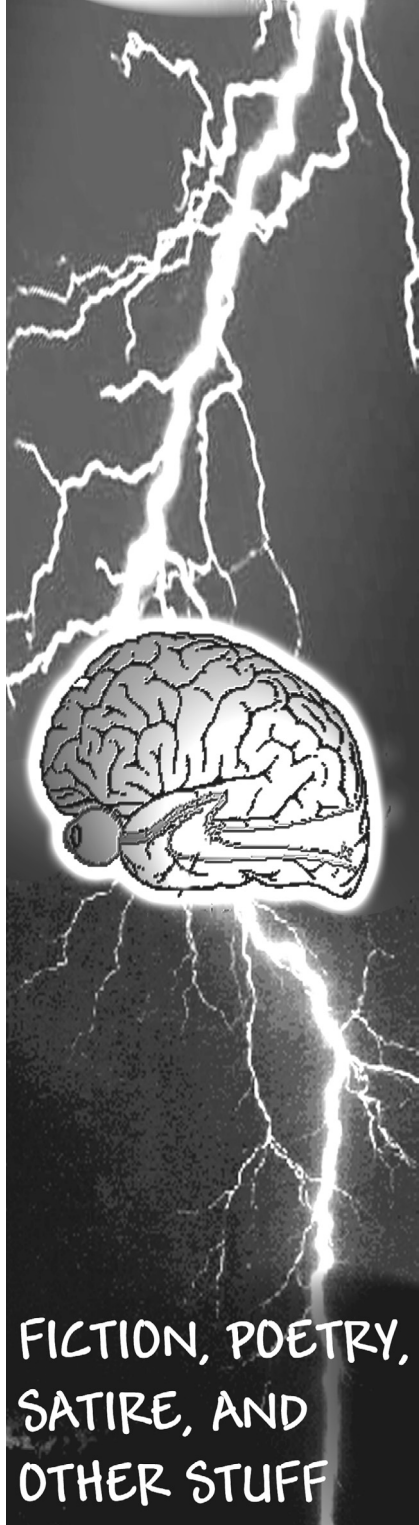


Poll open to: Hampshire users

submitted by: EltonJoe

SECTION
LIES

FICTION, POETRY,
SATIRE, AND
OTHER STUFF



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

From: Ralph J. Hexter

To: All Hampshire Community Members

Subject: New Year, New Presidency, New College

I would like to welcome all Hampshire Community members, both returning and new, to the first year of my presidency. We are embarking upon a new era in Hampshire College's short, but nonetheless illustrious, history. As your new president, I would like to share with you some of the exciting new changes underway at Hampshire College.

But first, I would like to welcome the class of 2009 again. This new class is perhaps the most diverse of all Hampshire classes. We have students entering from over two dozen countries! As this year proves, we continue to pursue Hampshire's goal of diversity: people that all hold the same opinions, but look somewhat different from one another.

As part of an initiative to make Hampshire a more competitive school, we have decided that tests will now be implemented in approximately 50% of our classes. It has not yet been decided what courses will have tests – these will be randomly selected half-way through the semester. All students are encouraged to actually read their assignments, as it would be good preparation in case their class is one of those lucky enough to be assigned tests.

I am sorry to announce that due to budget constraints, the school of HACU and IA have merged, and will now be known as HIACU. There will be a total of 3 full time staff for the school of HIACU: a dean of HIACU, one professor for writing/theater/dance/film/visual arts/literature/music, and a secretary to serve both professors. They will hold their classes in the writing center. Students interested in completing a Division II or III in the school of HIACU will need to go through rigorous seven day trial that will include fasting, sky-diving, hiking over 600 miles, fighting 3 grizzly bears while smothered in honey, and repelling an alien invasion using only a toothpick, rubber band, and some masking tape. The three lucky students that pass the trial with the highest score will be assigned with a professor that most accurately matches their interest.

But not all of my news is bad news. Thanks to generous donations from alumni, the school of NS will be able to expand! We have hired over a dozen new professors, in fields as diverse as quantum electro dynamical physics and quantum chromo dynamical physics. The school of NS will now utilize Franklin Patterson Hall, as the school of HIACU will no longer need the space. I would also like to remind all students that professors in NS *can* serve on Division II and III boards, and I would encourage students to approach these professors.

Beginning with the class of 2009, Hampshire will no longer have a Divisional System. All entering students will now choose a concentration, tentatively titled, in French, a "principal". Students will fulfill a "principal" by completing a number of courses pre-arranged according to the "principal" they choose. We hope all the students will find this educational tract much more enticing and easier to complete.

But enough of academics – what of Hampshire's true heart – the dining commons of course! In order to cut their costs with no loss of patron satisfaction, Sodexo Dining Services will now offer two exciting dishes every meal of everyday – meaty slop and veggie slop. All students in apartments on campus will now be enrolled in the meal plan, in order to better integrate them into the societal fabric of Hampshire College.

I hope that these changes excite you as much as they excited me. I look forward to seeing you, all of you, throughout the next year, and I imagine, many years to follow.

Best Wishes,

- RJH

by: Josh Hilliard

UNTITLED

What mysterious force could draw together such strange fellows as an Italian nobleman with a penchant for natural philosophy, a Norse woman warrior who delights in carnage, and a Tibetan monk with a few tricks up his sleeve? Could it be an ancient ritual so secretive that men would kill to find out more about it? Or an age old quest that spans generations and spurs forth the very future. How about a boy with a destiny so powerful that wars will be fought to control it? Well, it just so happens to be all three.

Join budding author Daniel Cottle as he takes the threads of epic fantasy, human history, modern-day magic, and cyberpunk sci-fi and weaves them into a unique (at times quirky) story of holy warriors, lonesome hackers and street-wise samurai spiked with healthy doses of conspiracy theory and ancient myth, served up on a fresh bed of high adventure.

In this, the first part of their epic story, our four esoteric companions journey to Iceland in the midst of a fierce winter searching for a ruined temple and find much more than they bargained for—one of the most fearsome men in all of history. Meanwhile, out of work programmer Jake Reutenauer has dreams of strange places he has never seen and events that he believes he could not possibly have experienced. He does not yet know how wrong he is.

This novel-in-progress will be published in parts by the kind editors of The Omen. Questions, comments, and feedback will be gratefully appreciated by Daniel J. Cottle of Merrill B115. E-mail: djc05@hampshire.edu. Where will you be when the war begins?

Icy Greetings

A lone figure emerged from the snow, climbing nimbly to the crest of the hill. It looked to be a boy of about thirteen, lanky but not weak. He was bundled up in layers of heavy cloaks, his head was wrapped in hoods and a thick scarf covered his face up to the bridge of his nose. This was, after all, an Icelandic winter, and there was a mild concern about catching cold. He had numerous packs

strapped to his back but he stood and moved as one unencumbered. This would not be an odd sight to see in rural Iceland. No passing shepherd would even spare a second glance, only there were no passing shepherds. (This was a particularly fierce Icelandic winter.) No, the only thing odd about this boy was that he had what would appear to be an enormous sword strapped to his back amongst the more mundane packages. It wrapped in the same coarse, brown cloth as all the other packages and there were no tell-tale signs that it was, in fact, a weapon. However, when one bears the bulky form of a cross on one's back, no passing shepherd really has to ask, provided that there are any passing shepherds (which there weren't.) Had there been any passing shepherds though, they surely would have fled in terror at what next came over the crest of the hill.

For three more figures were trudging up the icy slope through the howling gusts and the oppressive curtain of white, and one of them was riding on the back of what appeared to be a monstrous lizard. It only appeared to be an overgrown reptile because it was in truth a common green dragon, whose closest animal relatives are found in the avian area. And it was an infant dragon, at that. It was still in its early life stages and it hadn't really gotten its fire-breathing together. Still, it was steadily producing warm puffs of smoke that helped, in some small way, to melt the snow cover in its path.

Had the wandering shepherds stayed long enough to examine the figure that was perched atop the creature, they would have noted the bulky form of a warrior in full armor, draped in a rich green velvet cloak. Protruding from this cloak could be seen a heavy gauntlet, clutching the shaft of a wooden spear. If, from there, the eyes of the hypothetical herdsman traveled up the deeply engraved mahogany cylinder, they would find an intricate carved pattern in the shape of a serpent coiled around the spear, extending from butt to pointed metal tip. And if the pilgrim eyes continued their search they would light upon an un-helmeted head, shielded from the snow by that same green cloak and framed in waves of grey-golden hair,

by: Daniel J. Cottle



Nonsense Poetry Corner: apotheosis

The surly hawk of Saturn's rings
minds his tea and cleans his wings
he hasn't time for childish things...
cuz Waldo's gonna find him.

The coolie toils all night and day
for no respect and little pay
a cat-o-nine-tails bids him, "Pray...
cuz Waldo's gonna find you."

Barbarians and samurai
Pitch battle 'fore our lofty eye
the little lost cane's the reason why...
cuz Waldo's gonna find it.

I'll turn a pyramid upside-down,
I'll feign laughter, fake a frown,
I'll leave clues all over town...
cuz Waldo's gonna find me.

A little power, a little money
are not a land of milk and honey
I'm glad you think it's so damn funny...
cuz Waldo's gonna nail your ass to a cross.

by: Andrew Younkins

continued from previous page

UNTITLED

the kind that is bleached in the icy expanses of the north. This was where that same shepherd would give pause, for the face that calmly surveyed the surroundings in such a magisterial manner belonged to what some would call the gentler sex.

The stone cold visage contained definite traces of beauty, as if ages ago it had belonged to a young and innocent maiden, long before it was hardened in fighting's forge, bronzed by the battle. But now it appeared an ageless mask, showing discomfort neither at the floundering snow, nor the icy wind, both of which were whipping about, attempting to lay siege to her carefully covered skin. Just as it

began to seem that this heartless façade would endure, unchanging, forever frozen in the cold north wind, she glanced down at her peculiar mount and her lips softened into a smile. The dragon, for his part, continued jovially puffing out smoke, heedless of his rider's eyes. The rider slipped nimbly from the saddle, and landed knee-deep in the snow with a dull thud. The dragon grunted in apparent relief and lumbered off, snorting into the snowdrifts and watching gleefully as they disappeared.

The woman lowered her head and gazed at the young man, who still stood on the peak of the hill, surveying his surroundings with grim determi-

nation. The dragon approached him and started nuzzling him with his elongated snout. The young man patted the creature's head absentmindedly, never taking his eyes from the wintry hills that rolled away in every direction. He raised his arm to his face, shielding his eyes from the malicious elements and spotted their destination, still far off in the distance. There stood a great, bare rock face shooting up from the white downy blanket of snow. In the dim, mottled light that managed to pierce the dark clouds, the earthen protrusion was a foreboding sight arrayed against the bleak horizon.



PROLOGUE

It was the twilight of Zimria as the black hand of Arxantes held the world in its malignant grasp. It was a world immersed in darkness and the darkest realm of all was Vondur, the Land of Sorrows. That blighted patch of soil where nothing grew and everything wilted away. A cemetery of dreams where the enemies of Illur were slated for spiritual enslavement and physical obliteration.

The fortress itself loomed over the surrounding countryside. It was black, so black that it was unclear whether it had an actual material existence or whether it was merely a shadow, a deceitful mirage. Atop the highest spire was a golden statue of an opened hand. An eye gazed forth from the palm. One could even say the pupil of it shifted around, following its captives. Its message was clear: Illur is watching you and He is not pleased.

At the front of this shadow dungeon were two massive bronze doors. Engraved in them was a message for anyone unfortunate enough to read it. It said, "*Oblamin fataye ona zara inerada berasir e egrana ri uasada ona shero ri Ailvayr comprise ona ezesir Illur ri racejo*"—Repent sinner, for the pain that lies ahead will be as a grain of sand on the Ailvayr Shore compared to facing the wrath of Illur.

The Empire of the Black Hand never referred to Vondur as a dungeon. They called it *ona mana ri salvejin*: the place of salvation, but those who passed through Vondur's bronze

doors could not be saved from what ultimately awaited them. Death.

It was within the belly of Vondur that a condemned man hung by his heels, swept over by a wave of hunger and darkness. These were the peaceful times. How often he wished he would finally die in the tranquil darkness of this prison cell. Yet, isolation and silence never lasted forever. He could already hear the encroaching footsteps of his tormentors. Every step he heard sent a chill up his spine. He was one of the few Tuelans held captive in Arxantes' empire of dungeons, but that would not help him. The condemned man pressed his lips together and braced himself for the suffering that he knew was inevitable. However, today would be different, for the condemned man would never spend another day in the depths of Vondur.

The wooden door of the cell crashed open and the head of the dungeon, Sere Cahan, walked inside, flanked by four illverks. The dim torchlight burst into the cell. The condemned man flinched at the sight of it. Sere took his torch and shoved the flame into the condemned man's face. The condemned man released a timid whimper, no longer able to muster the strength to scream. Sere just laughed and began to speak. He spoke softly, as usual, but his voice always carried a sharp edge to it.

"Your tutelage is over, *rosocha*. I cannot tell you how much I have longed to see this moment.

The divine flames of Illur will finally administer justice."

Then the Baron Idatamis entered with three members of the Rikar Guardia, the elite bodyguards of the Empire. The Baron eyed the condemned man, a hint of sorrow showing in his face.

He sighed and said, "That a Tuelan could continue to adopt such a traitorous stance towards his country, his God, and his fellow people deeply saddens us. The usual policy of the Rikar is to execute traitors immediately, but I naively believed that the nobility of your blood could make you redeemable. Now, despite the patience and mercy of the Rikar, you continue to refuse the hand we have so benevolently extended. But our mercy and patience have been drained from us. You leave us no choice."

He turned to Sere and said, "Take the traitor to the execution grounds."

"It will be a pleasure to serve our Great God, Illur and his divinely appointed Prophet by disposing of this traitor and pagan," Sere replied, after which he bent over to kiss the Baron's hand.

The condemned man heard little and cared less. The news of his impending execution bore no weight, for he was already a living corpse, wasted away by torture, hunger, and the long hours of darkness and isolation. The only word uttered by him was the pitiful whisper of the name of his beloved wife, Eleanor.

"You still worry about that half-breed? You always were too sentimental to be a real Tuelan.

by: Michael Petersen

It was the influence of her degenerate blood. No wonder not even Our Grand Prophet Arxantes could never make anything out of you," scoffed the Baron after hearing his whisper.

He then paused briefly and continued on, "No matter though. You will join her soon enough." He then gestured dismissively to the Guardia and left.

Then Sere undid the chain that kept the condemned man suspended and the condemned man crashed face first into the stone floor.

"Take a good look at this room, *rosocha*. You won't be coming back to it this time," Sere said with a laugh. The black humor was lost on the condemned man, who could not see anything in the room anyway. The illverks hoisted his emaciated body up and carted him down the dungeon halls. He finally got a closer look at the illverks. It seemed as if the torchlight was causing their gangrenous, green skin to melt off their diseased bodies. With the illverks, however, appearances were deceiving, for their decaying frames disguised their terrible strength. The condemned man knew it. He had experienced the beatings at their hands; he could feel their iron clasp against his arm, mocking any pretensions of escape. Being touched by them felt like swimming in a bog. They stank as well, reeking of rotting flesh.

When the light first entered the condemned man's eyes, he slammed them shut. A normal guard would not have noticed it all, but Sere Cahan was no normal guard.

"I had almost forgotten. After all those years cooped up in that dark cell, you must be a delight

for you to see the sun again," he said, his fake smile painted across his wretched face.

He turned to the illverks and said, "Hold our friend in place while I let him take one good, long, last look at the sun."

The illverks obeyed while Sere pried open the eyes of the condemned man. As the condemned man stared into the sun, the hillsides began to grow blurry and the sky began to bleed. Meek, miserable howls escaped from his throat as his emaciated body trembled with fear. Soon these injured moans crescendoed into a knife-like scream, plunging itself into the air around him. All the while Sere's laughter rang throughout his ears. Then the light began to fade away into a suffocating darkness and the pain became too much for him, but the condemned man was lucky. His energy was finally exhausted and unconsciousness slowly came over his soul, a soothing drug that released him from his distress.

The condemned man awoke in a faraway village. *How had he gotten here?* It was a silent village, but it was not an empty village, for Thanatos covered the place like a funeral shroud. It was a small village and possibly was even a happy one, although one could not easily tell from the scene around him. It was once composed of several thatched huts, but ashes were all that remained here now. An army had obviously passed through here, the Tuelan one, he guessed. There was no one living here anymore, unless one counted the maggots and flies that were feasting on what was left of the once abundant remains. He began to inspect some of the fresher corpses.

He assumed they were Eastern Dwarves, but was not sure. Perhaps flesh darkened after a man had been dead for a while. He began to walk down the village road, towards the town square. On the way over, he saw more corpses lining the street. Most of the flesh was gone, but the blood lingered on. It stained the ground all around him, leaving ample evidence of the carnage that had taken place here. *Had he died? Is this what hell was like?*

When he reached the center of town, more horrors awaited him. The corpses were fresher and more numerous here. The condemned man could also tell that many different races were here. The old skeletons on the side roads must have been the original inhabitants. Either way, they all started to look the same once the maggots had got to them. In the middle of the square, there was a large pole with the Empire's flag flying on it. Tied around that pole was a rotting corpse, the string that killed it still around its neck. It rattled against the pole as the wind blew, piercing the jarring silence. He looked inside a nearby basket to find the remains of an infant curled up with its shattered skull. Gluttonous maggots covered the infant, indulging themselves in their vile feast. To the left of him were several charred corpses, the remains of those burned alive.

The nightmare was not over for the condemned man, however. From the north, he heard the cries of a young woman and her child. With them was a Tuelan soldier, his harsh voice barking orders. The condemned man now knew why this town had been left behind. It was an execution ground; the corpses

remained to strike fear into the hearts of those who were to follow them. They came into his view now. Seeing the corpses brought a newfound fear into the child, who started trembling.

The man who had allowed him to live on this property assured him that he would not come into contact with anyone in over a million years. Tajere shut his eyes and took a deep breath. It must be some type of mirage, he thought.

The mother was also in tears, although she tried to console the child. The Tuelan soldier evidently had no time for sentimentality, however. He yelled at the child and struck him across the face, knocking him to the ground. His mother, fearing for their lives, seized her weeping child and bundled him up next to her. At first, the condemned man was worried the soldier would notice him, but he did not seem to. The soldier was preoccupied with the young woman. He ripped her away from her child by pulling her by the hair. She screamed and pleaded with her captor. The condemned man did not know her language, but he did not need to. He squeezed his eyes shut; he could not look upon this dreadfulness any longer. It was no use. Her desperate screams penetrated the air and pulsated throughout his mind. He did not need to see her to know what was going on. Then her voice fell silent and he heard the sound of her body striking the ground. All that remained was the faint puppy-like whimpering of her child. Then he heard the sound of cold steel. Silence.

Chapter One

He toiled, as all men toiled in the fields of life. Most men live their lives in the middle of nowhere, wishing they could go somewhere, but this man had been somewhere and was glad to be back in the middle of nowhere again. Tajere Alleux had lived and laboured on these fields for many years, and although it was true that they were not the happiest years of his life, they sufficed nonetheless. The sun beat down on him as he worked, beating down upon a beaten man. It just was not as easy as it used to be, before his life took its sordid turn. The invisible load laid heavy upon his weary back as he bent over to sow his seeds of wheat. It was always difficult to plant in the rocky soil that had been bequeathed to him, but he managed to get by every year. As he worked, the sweat built up under his layers of clothing and ran down his wrinkled face. He stuck his hand under the thin veil shading his eyes and wiped the sweat off his forehead, flicking it off his hand and onto the soil. He did not like working in the sun, for it brought back dire memories, but when faced with the choice of sunlight or starvation, he opted for the lesser of two evils.

He was a diminutive man who had seen his best years go by long ago. He was draped in a gray burlap overshirt and wore thick woolen pants and wooden shoes. He could not see well anymore but he could still see well enough to plant a large enough crop to make his daily bread. His harvest had become progressively smaller each year, but he still managed to feed

himself. His worry was that he would soon not be able to. Or was it a worry? He had few reasons to continue living, which to him seemed to consist wholly of misery and backbreaking labor, but physical hunger was a great motivator for survival.

He had not lain eyes upon another human being in all this time. He supposed that was what made these times bearable. Yet, isolation and silence never last forever. For he saw the outline of a human figure on the horizon, among the background of ruddy cliffsides and swaying palms, drifting along the road towards his home. *Had they discovered where he was living?* The man who had allowed him to live on this property assured him that he would not come into contact with anyone in over a million years. Tajere shut his eyes and took a deep breath. It must be some type of mirage, he thought. Then he opened his eyes again and tried to focus, past the arid

Anaril looked to his side and noticed an attached room with an actual bed, or actually a wood framing with a compartment to place straw in, but more advanced than the usual way of sleeping on a pile of thrush in the corner on the floor. Very suspicious, indeed.

haze. Indeed, the man was still there. Tajere dropped his hoe and looked for a way to escape. You fool, he thought to himself; he has already seen you. Where will you hide, anyway? Tajere sighed. The nagging voice inside him was right. There was nowhere to hide. He was a fool to believe he could escape for the rest of his life. It was only a

matter of time before they discovered him.

The only thing stranger than the circumstance was the man, if one could call him a man, who came to visit him. The reason is that he had many of the features of a man: fingers, toes, a human frame, and a human voice. However, this human frame was adorned with the head of a bird and jet-black feathers covered his jet-black skin, far darker than Tajere's swarthy, olive complexion. He was clothed in a plain black cloth. It hugged him below the arms and hung down around his ankles like a dress. In contrast to the simplicity of his attire was the ornate wooden staff he held in his hand, covered with the strange engravings of an unknown language and having a large and perfectly rounded black jewel positioned at its tip.

"Greetings, *rosocha*. What brings you this way?" Tajere asked the stranger. He tried to speak in his normal voice, but he knew that he was speaking in a halting voice. Like someone who has something to hide but lacks the ability to hide it. He was expecting a shrill shriek to meet him in reply, so he was quite shocked when he heard a dignified voice that could have belonged to an old scholar.

"Fate, or perhaps destiny, or perhaps nothing at all, merely a fit of aimless wandering. My name is Anaril. Might I inquire of yours?"

"My name is Tajere," he said with hesitation, wondering who this stranger was and what he wanted of him.

"Greetings, Tajere. What are you doing out here?"

"I am just getting my field ready for the next growing season."

"You must be a very diligent worker to have finished planting your entire field already." Tajere just laughed, as one would laugh at a fool or a drunkard.

"Planting a field is something that requires a great deal of time and hard work. Now I don't mean to be inhospitable, but if you have nothing important to tell me, I must try to finish what I need to before sunfall."

Tajere then turned around

Occupations never end. Perhaps single occupations may come and go, but the principle is always existent. Once one will has predominated over another, it will continue to do so until the other will is able to once again gain enough power to impose itself

and could not believe his eyes. The field had indeed been planted already. He crept over and sifted through the dirt for the seeds, convinced that the field must be an illusion, but the seeds were there and quite real. He supposed it must be some form of magic. Petra had told him about it once and even showed him a simple spell, but he had never seen it done on such a scale before. Of course, he had also never seen such a man before. But he must not think of such things. If he did not kill the past, the past would end up killing him.

"I suppose that you are right," Tajere stammered, "Forgive me for my rudeness. Would you like to come inside and have a cup of tea?"

"I would be quite honored." They went inside and Tajere started a fire to prepare the tea. Tajere's home was rustic but

rather luxurious compared to the ramshackle huts that most of Tuela's rural population inhabited. He had wooden planks on his floor instead of the dirt that most people had and the workmanship on the wood was of very high quality, providing excellent insulation, despite the fact that one could still feel the drafts that came through from time to time. One might refer to it as a barren and unprosperous hovel, but the few items that were visible were definitely enough to pique Anaril's interest. He even had a table with chairs situated around it. It was not exactly the gold-plated throne that one would expect to find in a royal court, but was much nicer than anything one could expect to find in the home of a peasant, especially one who worked alone. Then Anaril looked to his side and noticed an attached room with an actual bed, or actually a wood framing with a compartment to place straw in, but more advanced than the usual way of sleeping on a pile of thrush in the corner on the floor. Very suspicious, indeed. Anaril began to wonder if this man might be some magician. The trick with the fields seemed to surprise him, but you never could tell what people are hiding.

Anaril scrutinized him as he prepared the tea. The water was boiling now and Tajere dropped the tealeaves, allowing them to glide down towards the kettle. They thrashed about in the turbulent waters as Tajere stirred with a branch. He then walked towards a small, wooden chest and brought out two cups. He carried the two cups and kettle to the table where Anaril was sitting.

"Help yourself," Tajere said,

smiling with his lips. Tajere always smiled with just his lips.

"Thank you. I admire your furnishings," Anaril said as he dipped his cup into the teapot, "Where did you obtain such fine things?"

Tajere was hesitant, not knowing who this man was and not wanting to give any information away.

"They were a gift from a friend that I received quite some time ago."

"You must have excellent friends if they are willing to go to such lengths to provide you with such luxuries."

"Do you travel quite frequently, Anaril?" Tajere interjected, trying to change the subject.

"I tend to. If you stay too long in a single place, you spurn the rest of the world."

"I imagine I could agree with that for I have been one who has spurned the world, or it has spurned me to be more precise. Perhaps you could bring me some news of what is going on outside of these confines. Has the Occupation ended?"

"Occupations never end. Perhaps single occupations may come and go, but the principle is always existent. Once one will has predominated over another, it will continue to do so until the other will is able to once again gain enough power to impose itself, but in that case the occupation has not so much ended as it has changed hands. However, if you are asking if foreign troops have left Tuela, the answer is yes." Tajere laughed at the sentiment.

"You certainly speak the truth. I can tell you that from experience. That is why I came out here, to avoid being occu-

pied. However, I am still quite relieved to hear that the Alliance troops have left."

"You can never avoid being occupied, no matter how far you run. Were you a partisan?"

"I once collaborated with some members of that movement, but I found their idealization of the Empire to be distasteful," Tajere said.

"You are a rarity among Tuelans. Almost everywhere one goes, one hears a Tuelan waxing eloquent about how good everything was under the Empire."

"The Empire took everything from me. Then the Occupation took everything from my people. Then I took from myself the last thing I could have gained." After a brief pause, Tajere continued, "I do worry about my people, though. I had once hoped for a future of peace and reconciliation, but I think the Occupation ended that hope. The fact that the Empire is still held in high esteem seems to confirm my worries."

"Yes, peace and reconciliation. Everyone in the world says that they desire peace, yet peace is the one thing we have never had. However, I did witness the war and I don't find it very surprising that feelings of revenge were more on the minds of those who suffered from the atrocities of the Empire than forgiveness was," Anaril said. Tajere looked down at the floor, ashamed.

"I know this. I have been trying to tell others that for years. I too have been victimized and brutalized by the Empire. But the tyranny of the Occupation was not the answer. I have seen my people suffer as well. The Tuelans probably will never understand the suffering they

inflicted upon the rest of the world, but it is just as true that the rest of the world will probably never understand the Tuelans."

"No one really understands another race of people. Everyone says that they can, but how can they when they cannot even understand themselves?"

"Perhaps only Elohim, Lord of all that lives, has any understanding."

"Or perhaps he has no understanding at all, just like the rest of us. Perhaps this world has obtained a logic of its own, beyond anyone's control. Some have tried to prove that gods exist. They say that there is always someone or something considered by all to be higher than everything else. Therefore, according to these learned scholars, it must be a god. I have no doubt that Elohim exists in the flesh, but is he truly a god or man pretending to be one?" Tajere glared at him, his mouth agape, but Anaril just laughed. He had a strange laugh, quite unlike his dignified speaking voice. It reminded Tajere of a giggling girl crossed with a cackling bird. The sound of it made Tajere laugh as well.

"Let us move on. May I ask one more favor of you?" Anaril asked.

"Certainly."

"Could you possibly entertain me with a story?"

"Well, there is really only one story to tell."

"Then by all means tell it to me, for a story left untold is not really worth telling at all."



UMPHREY AND HIS PARTNER

The rain flowing down the yarns back while Umphrey the housekeeper sits down in his neighborhood flat, eyeing the rainbow he looks into his partner's eyes and says, could this happiness really be wrong or illegal and if it is what does it matter, because I'm feeling the air now, just as every man wants to feel the air. His partner having just come back from a store where chicken kabobs were sold right next to vegetable ones, and eating neither, smirks and begins to play with his radio. Umphrey's partner is masked and anonymous flying up from the night and kissing away the day. His service to Umphrey is only in the seek of fortune and nothing else. Eventually, Umphrey will be gone and Umphrey's partner, having never given a real name to anyone will be away and off in the daylight where no one can see him at all. Where no one can see anyone. The yarn now being completely twisted, the

rain screeches to a halt. Clouds of gray vanish. Umphrey and his partner follow...

Into the mystic of clouds once again, the sunlight finally dimming to show a large plane carrying hundreds of passengers, nighttime...fall asleep. Passengers all in a vicinity willing to put their guards down and retreat into unpredictable dreams. None of them would rest so easy if they had the knowledge of the pilot's novel...he had been working on a novel surrounding the immoral destruction of the rainforest. Angry and sweaty he takes on a nosedive only to awaken the passengers to the inevitable truth of the world. Back through the mystic of clouds the plane descends further and further until with a snap of the finger all the passengers are alerted, back to reality and completely forgetful of the dreams occurring only seconds ago. Every one of them awake and startled...

talking to their nearest neighbor for comforting purposes...like bloodsucking leaches they gain enough juice to regain the balance of the day. The plane suddenly levels out and heads for the clouds, no one is harmed, barely anyone realized anything ever happened...only some turbulence they all said, all except for poor Umphrey and his partner, neither of whom ever woke up to the bumps and bruises of the pilot's depression. Instead they kept to their own worlds, dreaming of situations both improbable and impractical where a pilot, coming off a bitter divorce and the loss of his two kids, decides its time to end everything. Thanksgiving just around the corner, hundreds of families suffer deeply. Umphrey and his partner reach the ground at once and the two of them--quietly, hesitantly and most gratefully--lag out of the terminal gate...

by: Noah Feldman



FIRST SUNDAY

by: Noah Feldman
In the freedom of inspiration to perish alone in a cave. Dreaming of angels and gravesites filled with repetitive thoughts, lonesome nightmares shrieking aloud with deviled stares. Sometimes the world only seems to hold one train of thought, its tracks colliding and conforming with every train appearing to run away. Afraid to climb out of the dark and face the sun, millions sit in their holes constantly reminding that they are afraid of none. Yet if

the truth speaks to me then I guess I am alone, I hear the speakers and the preachers and I know they are condoned. Condone for being violent and furious and angry, they prance around announcing change, welcomed by few but sung by oh so many. And here it comes arousing, speaking to that deviled heart now. Now come sing to me. While my branches still hang in the distance, while my soul still laughs and cries. Don't let me wash down that drain for a

simple word and a half, because they have never become to progress towards a finish involving more than one human being.

With this phrase and a twinkle in the eye (or was that a tear, or does it even matter) this may cause drowsiness or dizziness but to fulfill something within that is called every day and every night. And to neglect the other inhabitants of the world, they running, lashing out with their tongues at every chance, want-

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ing to scrape every last digital photograph off its pallet. While others are there standing and staring and waiting for the end. Hinting at forgiveness and smelling its fervor, they instead dive into the deep pools of cold water, needing to be awoken every half hour. Until one day or one night, one time that rocks just come to meet and shout and discuss every unimportant, insignificant thing that exists a lever is pulled in making a chair spin. Catapulted into the sky forever and forever! A triangle beneath a fiery lamp.

Oh what a surprise!

And the march starts over again. A bang...and Jimmy takes his first bite of cereal. Corn Flakes... low fat milk...and just a little bit of sugar. Poor Jimmy. Poor Jimmy. He is having too much innocent fun just snapping away at his Corn Flakes. Little does he know that Corn Flakes are not fun. They are bland pieces of crunchy nothingness sitting in a bowl the most hideous color of white. They are waiting and staring and knowing there is nothing but to be eaten alive. And is Jimmy the only one who hears them talk or has this room yet to converge close enough on the reality of the situation. Jimmy has no stories to tell of his encounters with those lovely Corn Flakes, he only fakes orgasms at the sight of a group laughing and never had figured out what it was that kept him and his chair so stuck to a muddy ground. The mud named Sheira. Cuddly...comforting Sheira. And she told me tonight, not to worry. That life is revolving with so many opendoors and clouds that could rain or pour, but also fill up a beautiful sky. When anger is direction and direction is force and force is meaning and meaning

is being content. Then how is the answer any different? Jimmy has ate away,

sometimes hesitanlty, often hoping to balance out the milk to grain ratio, but

he has never stopped, checked his mirror dipped down and ignored listening.

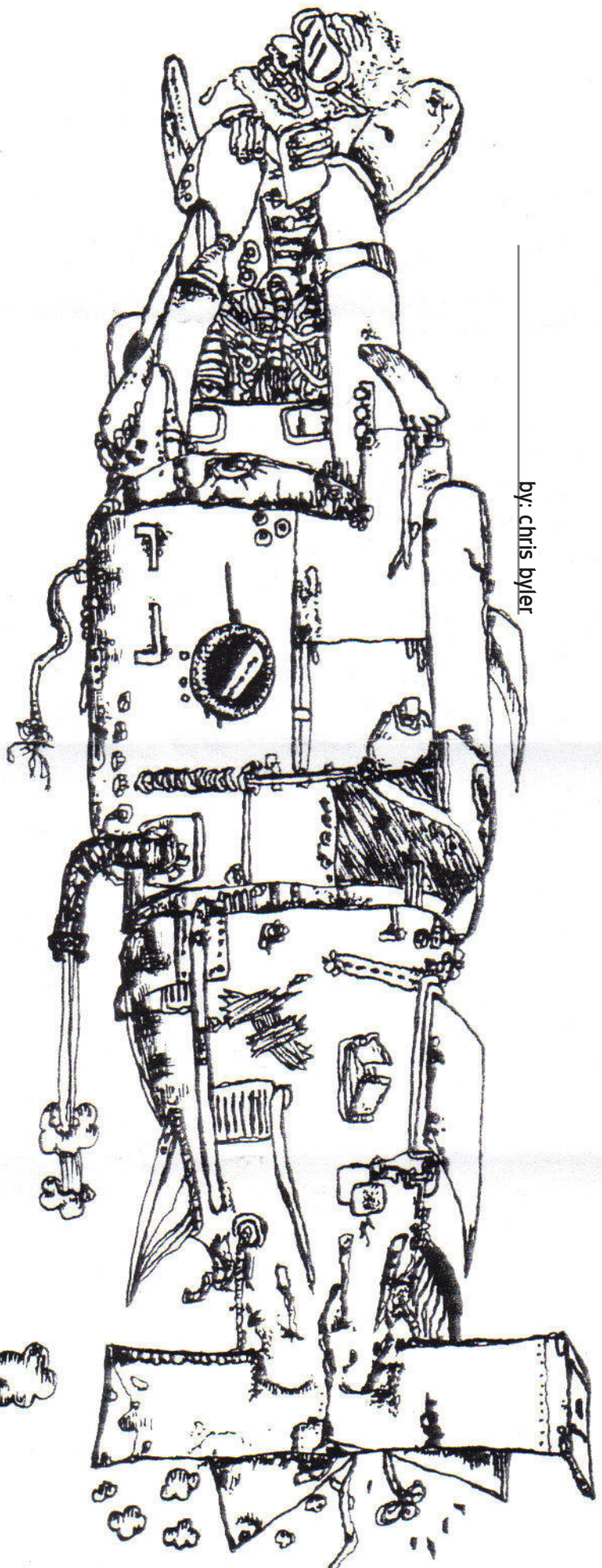
The Corn Flakes won't let him go, like a magnetic force holding on, and Jimmy

realizes he has done no wrong. No wrong at all. That his path is right if he

takes it with himself alive and that he is so so close to the start and not as

far away from the finish as the board would allow them to believe.

Crunch...crunch...crunch.



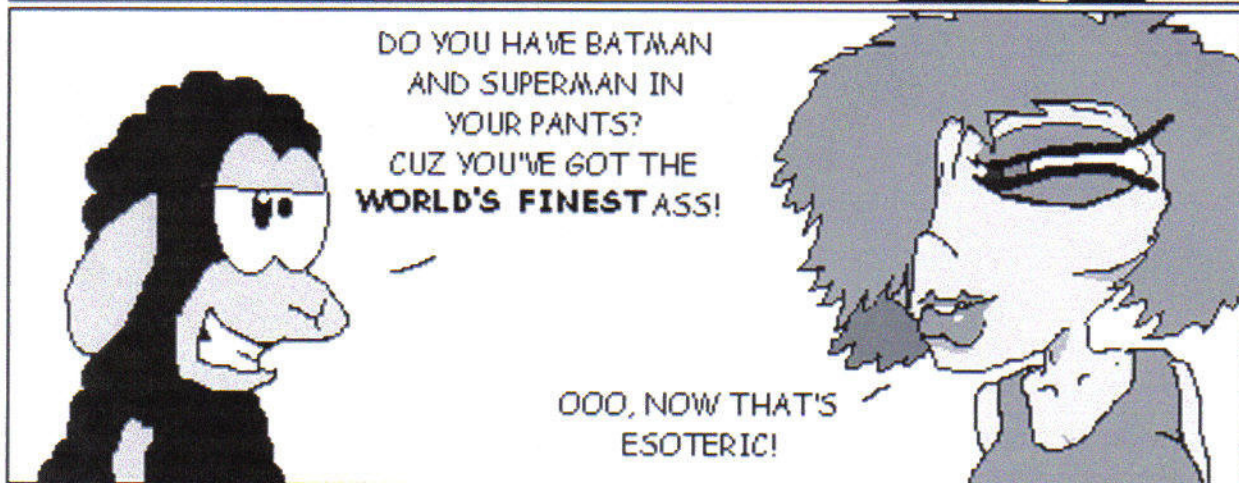
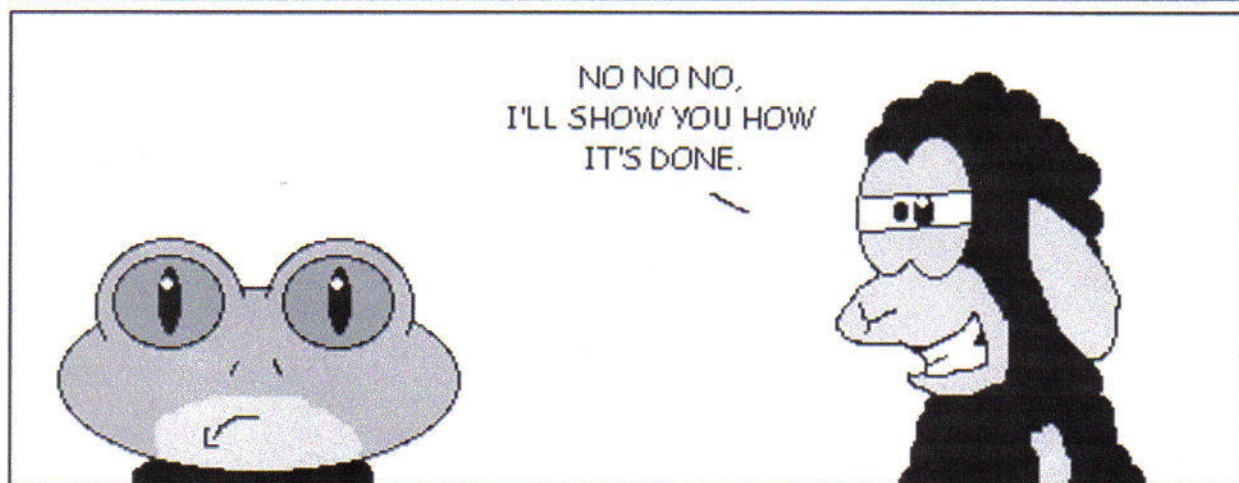
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